



University of Groningen

18. The Setting of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy

Labuschagne, C.J.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

2008

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Labuschagne, C. J. (2008). 18. The Setting of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy. s.n.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

18. The Setting of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy

Originally published in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Literature. Festschrift C.H.W. Brekelmans*, edited by M. Vervenne and J. Lust (BETL 133) Leuven University Press, 1997, pp. 111-129.

See also <http://www.labuschagne.nl/2a.deut32.pdf>

The purpose of this article is to readdress the complicated problems regarding the setting of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy. I intend to define, delimit and analyze its literary context more precisely and to shed new light on the structure of its framework. Writing this as a contribution to the volume of studies on Deuteronomy and deuteronomistic literature in honour of our highly respected colleague Chris Brekelmans, I realize that more than 25 years have passed since I first directed my attention to these problems. I refer to an essay published in 1971, for which I profited by the studies of Otto Eissfeldt and particularly Norbert Lohfink and expressed my own view on the framework and on the structure of the Song.¹

At that time, when many scholars were spellbound by the widely accepted traditional method of old-style literary criticism, with its one-sided diachronic approach to the text, I favoured with Lohfink a *redaktionsgeschichtliche* approach to the text of the framework and wrote: "By approaching the problems from this angle we hope to bring about an essential corrective to the method of literary criticism."² Later on I insisted on a fundamental renewal of the literary critical method, appealing to scholars to have and show more respect for the biblical text in its final form and to give priority to a synchronic approach - before undertaking the historically oriented diachronic study of the text. As part of this renewal I pleaded for the introduction of logotechnical (numerical) structural analysis as an essential literary critical operation to be carried out as the very first step in textual analysis.³

Now, after a lapse of a quarter of a century, I consider the time ripe for a revisit to the problem of the setting of the Song and for a fresh definition and analysis of its framework. Such a reassessment has become necessary, first, in light of recent developments in the study of the Old Testament - the marked, greater emphasis on a synchronic approach to the text, redaction criticism and structural analysis - and secondly, in light of recently discovered compositional

¹ See my study "*The Song of Moses: Its Framework and Structure*", in *De Fructu Oris Sui: Essays in Honour of Adrianus van Selms*, edited by I.H. Eybers et al. (Pretoria Oriental Series, Vol. IX), Leiden 1971, pp. 85-98; O. Eissfeldt, "*Die Umrahmung des Moseliedes Dtn 32,1-43 und des Mosegesetzes Dtn 1-30 in Dtn 31,9 - 32,47*", in *Kleine Schriften III*, Tübingen 1966, pp. 322-334, and his book *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32,1-43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Moseliedes*, Berlin 1958; N. Lohfink, "*Der Bundesschluß im Land Moab. Redaktionsgeschichtliches zu Dt 28,69 - 32,47*", in *BZ 6* (1962), pp. 32-56.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 90. "The literary critical method has its merits, but it still has shortcomings. It has to be complemented and, sometimes, corrected by other methods. The framework to the Song of Moses is one of the instances where literary criticism fails to understand that larger literary passages should also be judged on their merits as functional entities with due regard for the intention of the author or redactor."

³ "*De literaire kritische methode*", in A.S. Van der Woude (red.), *Inleiding tot de studie van het Oude Testament*, Kampen 1986, 1993², pp. 102-127, with Exodus 3 as a test case.

techniques used by the biblical writers, which can contribute considerably to a better understanding of the structure of these texts.⁴

Determining the framework

The first problem to be addressed concerns the definition and precise delimitation of the framework. Some commentators seem to regard the two verses immediately before and after the Song as its (inner) framework (31:30, the heading and 32:44, the conclusion), as suggested by the manner in which they delimit the text of the Song, namely: 31:30 - 32:44 (P.C. Craigie, H.D.A. Mayes and G. Braulik).⁵ Others delimit the Song as 31:30 - 32:47 (e.g. J.A. Thompson),⁶ or 31:16 - 32:44 (e.g. K.FR. Kraemer).⁷

Some scholars consider a more extended text to be the framework: 31:27b-30 and 32:44.45 (e.g. M. Noth), or 31:19-22 and 32:44 (G. Fohrer), or 31:16-29.30 and 32:44-47 (G. Von Rad, who refers to it as *Rahmenerzählung*), or 31:14-23 and 32:44 (O. Eissfeldt), or 29:1 - 31:30 and 32:44-47 as the wider context, with 31:16-22.28-30 and 32:44-47 as the inner framework (N. Lohfink), or the whole text of 31:1-30 and 32:44 - 34:12 as the wider framework, with 31:16-30 as the 'introduction' and 32:44-47 as the 'postscript' (my view expressed in 1971).⁸

⁴ For such discoveries and for the meaning of logotechnical (numerical structural) analysis the reader is referred to my earlier (preliminary) work, "*The Pattern of the Divine Speech Formulas in the Pentateuch. The Key to its Literary Structure*", in VT 32 (1982), pp. 268-296 - cf. also VT 34 (1984), pp. 91-95 and 407-413 (the discovery of the 7-pattern and the 7+4-pattern as structuring devices); id., "*The Literary and Theological Function of Divine Speech in the Pentateuch*", J.A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume, Salamanca 1983* (VT Suppl 36), Leiden 1985, pp. 154-173; id., "*Divine Speech in Deuteronomy*", in N. Lohfink (Hrsg.), *Das Deuteronomium. Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft* (BETL 68), Leuven 1985, pp. 111-126 (both articles are about the discovery of the use of the divine name numbers 17 and 26 to give unity and structure to the divine speeches); id., "*On the Structural Use of Numbers as a Composition Technique*", in JNSL 12 (1984 [1986]), pp. 87-99; id., "*Some Significant Composition Techniques in Deuteronomy*" in *Scripta, Signa Vocis: Studies about Scripts, Scriptures, Scribes and Languages in the Near East Presented to J.H. Hoppers by His Pupils, Colleagues and Friends*, Groningen 1986, pp. 121-131; id., "*Neue Wege und Perspektiven in der Pentateuchforschung*", in VT 36 (1986), pp. 146-162; id., "*De numerieke structuuranalyse van de bijbelse geschriften*", in NTT 41 (1987), pp. 1-16; id., "*Opmerkelijke compositietechnieken in het boek Micha*" in F. García Martínez et al. (eds.), *Profeten en profetische geschriften*, Kampen - Nijkerk 1987, pp. 100-116; and especially my more recent work: *Deuteronomium* in the series *De prediking van het Oude Testament (POT)*, Nijkerk, deel IA en IB 1987; deel II 1990; deel III Baarn 1997 and my book *Vertellen met getallen. Functie en symboliek van getallen in de bijbelse oudheid*, Zoetermeer 1992.

⁵ P.C. Craigie, *The book of Deuteronomy* (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament), Grand Rapids 1976, p. 373; H.D.A. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (The New Century Bible Commentary), Grand Rapids - London, 1979/1981, p. 380, and G. Braulik, *Deuteronomium II* (Die Neue Echter Bibel), Würzburg 1992, pp. 226f.

⁶ J.A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (Tyndale O.T. Commentaries), Leicester - Downers Grove, 1974, 296.

⁷ K.FR. Kraemer, *Numeri und Deuteronomium* (Herders Bibelkommentar), Freiburg 1955, p. 538.

⁸ See for particulars about the authors cited here, my essay in FS - Van Selms, *De Fructu Oris Sui* (cf. note 1 above), pp. 87-90 and especially pp. 90-92 for my own view at that time. For a survey of the different opinions with regard to the literary context of the Song, see the recently published Kampen dissertation of P. Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32*, Leiden - New York - Köln 1996, who also studied the literary context (pp. 333-352). Seeing the purpose of his investigation, Sanders is more interested in the history, origin and dating of this context, and in the allusions in it to the Song, than in its precise delimitation and structure, which he regards as 31:1-30 and 32:44-47.

The confusion with regard to what 'the framework' is, seems to be complete. In the present study I intend to show that we should discern a wider outer, as well as an inner framework. Moreover, I shall try to clarify the issues by adducing new evidence regarding the structure of the framework, which bears witness to the unity of conception in chapters 31-32 and 34. Much of the confusion about the setting of the Song is due particularly to the problems with regard to the extremely difficult chapter 31 - e.g. the problem of the sequence of events as envisaged by the last author/redactor, the relationship between the Torah and the Song (especially in vss. 9-13 and 24-30) and the difficulty in detecting the coherence among the material so diverse in character and content. Up till now we seem to have failed in discerning its literary structure. Typical, and representative of the total lack of understanding among many scholars, is G.E. Wright's remark: "it is something of a mystery why the heterogeneous contents of this chapter are so badly disarranged", and G. Von Rad's verdict: "Das ganze Kapitel bietet ja mehr Traditionsgeröll als ein wirkliches Fortschreiten in der erzählenden Darstellung".⁹ Some commentators tried to resolve the difficulty regarding the coherence of the seemingly heterogeneous material by negating or ignoring the existence of any coherence, feeling free to reorganize the text in their own way. K.Fr. Kraemer, e.g., comments on the text in the following order: vss. 1-13 + 24-27 + 14-15.23 + 16-22 + 28-30 + 32: 1-44, and P.D. Miller: vss. 1-8 + 14-15.23 + 9-13 + 24-29 + 16-22 + 32:1-47.¹⁰ Such a treatment of the text is, in my opinion, absolutely unwarrantable.

The study of this complex chapter by means of the traditional method of the older literary criticism, has on the one hand opened our eyes to the problems, but on the other hand greatly contributed to the confusion by viewing it as a literary conundrum that can only be resolved by dissecting and disarranging the text. It was N. Lohfink, who paved the way towards a better understanding of the context of the Song, and more particularly of the coherence of the material within chapter 31, by approaching the problems from a redaktionsgeschichtliche angle, with due regard for the intention of the author/redactor.¹¹

Though I do not agree with some of his views, as I shall demonstrate presently, he was the first modern scholar who seriously tried to understand what the person(s) responsible for the arranging of this seemingly heterogeneous material really had in mind. I fully endorse Lohfink's

⁹ G.E. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, in *The Interpreter's Bible*, Nashville 1953, p. 516; G. Von Rad, *Das fünfte Buch Mose* (ATD 8), Göttingen 1964, p. 136.

¹⁰ P.D. Miller, *Deuteronomy* (Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching), Louisville 1990, pp. 216ff.

¹¹ See N. Lohfink, "Der Bundesschluß im Land Moab", and his more recent study "Zur Fabel in Dtn 31-32", in R. Bartelmus et al. (Hrsg.), *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte* (= FS - Klaus Baltzer, OBO 126) Freiburg - Göttingen 1993, pp. 255-279, and compare his most recent study "Zur Fabel des Deuteronomiums", in G. Braulik, *Bundesdokument und Gesetz. Studien zum Deuteronomium* (Herders biblische Studien 4) Freiburg 1995, 65-78.

underlying supposition that the text, in its final form, is not the fortuitous result of a process of additions attached to the text in a haphazard way, but the product of a well-planned, designed composition. I shall adduce evidence below to substantiate this assumption, mainly drawn from my logotechnical analysis of the book.

It is not difficult to determine the setting of the Song, since it belongs unquestionably to the concluding chapters of the book, dealing with the very last provisions and measures taken by Moses before his death: Deuteronomy 31-34. Most scholars are aware of the fact that there is a break - in a certain sense a discontinuity - between the evidently concluding address of Moses to all Israel (29:1 - 30:20) in connection with the Moab covenant, and the narrative in chapters 31-34. This last section of the book is quite different from the preceding Moab covenant section (26:16 - 30:20), both in character and form. It functions as a postscript to the Torah (1:1 - 30:20) presented as having been written by Moses (31:9).¹²

So we can safely assume that the wider framework preceding the Song consists of 31:1-30. The rest of the framework, after the Song, comprises the whole text of 32:44 - 34:12, as I shall demonstrate, that is to say without the Blessing of Moses in chapter 33. The Blessing clearly disturbs the framework to the Song - a clear indication that it was inserted into the book at a later stage. It was, however, not inserted at an arbitrary place, but at a logical stage in the narrative - just before Moses climbs the mountain where he would die - and in such a way that it forms the central core of its own sixfold framework: 32:44-47; 48-52; 33:1; 33:2-29; 34:1-4; 5-8; 9-12.¹³

The overall structure of Deuteronomy 31-34

Having logotechnically analyzed the wider framework, as it had been prior to the insertion of the Blessing, and having delimited the 'larger' and 'smaller' sections, I discovered that the framework can be divided into six 'larger' literary units, with the Song at their focal point:

- 31:1-13 Moses' final provisions in view of his nearing death
- 31:14-23 Yahweh's charges to Moses and Joshua in the tent
- 31:24-30 Moses' provisions regarding the Song
- 32:1-43 *The Song of Moses*
- 32:44-47 Moses' last charge to 'all Israel'
- 32:48-52 Yahweh's command to Moses to climb the mountain
- 34:1-12 Moses' death, funeral and the necrology for him.

The overall structure of the framework, with the Song as its central core, is based upon a fixed pattern, consisting of *seven* closely connected elements - which can, but need not necessarily,

¹² N. Lohfink, "*Der Bundesschluß im Land Moab*", pp. 48, 50f., regards 29:1 - 32:47 as "eine umfassende Komposition" - see my criticism of his view in my commentary, *Deuteronomium* (POT), deel III, under the heading 'Literaire analyse van 29:1-28(2-29)'. For the term 'postscript', which is more accurate than 'appendix', see J.G. McConville and J.G. Millar, *Time and place in Deuteronomy* (JSOT Suppl 179), Sheffield 1994, p. 83.

¹³ See *Deuteronomium* (POT), III, under 'Inleiding tot het derde hoofddeel (vervolg): Deuteronomium 31-34'.

be symmetric - with the fourth in the centre at the focal point. The paramount importance attached to the centre of a text is, as may be noted in passing, the reason why the masoretes determined, by counting, the centre of a book or group of books precisely, on the level of verses, words and even letters.¹⁴ It concerns one of the major compositional patterns to be found not only in Deuteronomy but throughout the Old Testament, which was very frequently used by the biblical writers to give unity and structure to their texts. Elsewhere I have described this particular structure, which I call the *menorah-pattern* (on the analogy of the six-branched candelabrum), and of which I have discovered numerous instances.¹⁵

The same pattern has been used to give structure to the text of chapter 31 with its *seven* 'smaller' literary units, which can easily be determined on the basis of the *seven* speeches - four by Moses and three by Yahweh, with Yahweh's speech concerning his theophany in the tent situated exactly in the centre:

- 1-6 Moses' charge to the Israelites
- 7-8 Moses installs Joshua as his successor
- 9-13 Moses' provision with regard to his literary legacy
- 14-15 *Yahweh appears to Moses and Joshua in the tent*
- 16-21 Yahweh commands Moses and Joshua to write a song
- 22-23 Moses writes the Song; Yahweh installs Joshua
- 24-30 Moses' provisions with regard to the Song.

This pattern recurs for a third time, in the inner framework vss. 24-30, with its *seven* verses and with the crucial vs. 27 as its central core, in which Moses expresses his deep concern for his people facing the danger of apostasy after his death. The central position of the Song in its literary context corresponds with that of at least three other very important texts, which are likewise situated in their literary context at the centre of a menorah-structure. The first example is the blessing and curse passage in 28:1-68 in the preceding chapters 27-30:

¹⁴ See my *Vertellen met getallen* (cited above), pp. 18ff.

¹⁵ See my commentary, *Deuteronomium* (POT), deel IA, pp. 30-32 and cf. my book *Vertellen met getallen*, cited above, pp. 51ff. and 109ff. See with regard to series and clusters of *seven* in the book of Deuteronomy G. Braulik, "Die Funktion von Siebenergruppierungen im Endtext des Deuteronomium", in F.V. Reiterer (Hrsg.), *Ein Gott, eine Offenbarung* (FS - N. Füglistner), Würzburg 1991, pp. 37-50, who seemed to be ignorant of my research in this respect and my discovery of such 'Siebenergruppierungen', to which I referred as 'clusters of seven' and 'series of seven' - see the literature cited above in note 4.

For a recent study on the menorah see Trudy Labuschagne, *De Menora in woord en beeld. Een studie over de vorm, functie en betekenis van de Menora in het Oude Testament en de latere symboliek* (doctoraalscriptie Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid), Rijksuniversiteit te Groningen, 1993.

- 27:1-8 The installation of the torah and the cult in the land
- 27:9-10 The installation of Israel as the people of Yahweh
- 27:11-26 The installation of blessing and curse in the land
- 28:1-68.69 *The implications of blessing and curse*
- 29:1-28 Admonitory reflection upon the Moab covenant
- 30:1-10 Prophetic promise of hope: return to the land
- 30:11-20 Prophetic admonition: the crucial choice.

The second example is the setting of the important chapter 7 - dealing with Israel's relationship with the other nations - in its wider context, chapters 4-11:¹⁶

- 4:1-40 Admonitory sermon warning against idolatry
- 5:1-6:3 Discourse on the essence of the Horeb covenant
- 6:4-25 The essence of Israel's faith
- 7:1-26 *Israel's position with regard to other nations*
- 8:1-9:6 The land as a gift of Yahweh
- 9:7-10:11 Discourse on the dramatic events at Horeb
- 10:12-11:32 Admonitory sermon: the preconditions for survival.

The third example is the setting of the lawcode (chapters 12-26) at the centre of the book of Deuteronomy. The central position of the lawcode has been observed before, but it has not yet been recognized that the overall structure of the book could be another instance of the commonly used *sevenfold* structure.¹⁷

¹⁶ Deuteronomy 7 has itself a menorah-structure: 1-4; 5-6; 7-11; 12-16; 17-20; 21-24; 25-26. See *Deuteronomium* (POT), deel IA pp. 49-51 for the structure of chapters 4-11, and deel IB pp. 101-103 for that of chapter 7. For a totally different view of Deuteronomy 7 and its context, see D.L. Christensen, "Form and structure in Deuteronomy 1-11", in N. Lohfink (Hrsg.), *Das Deuteronomium* (BETL 68), Leuven 1985, pp. 135-144, especially 140ff., and more particularly regarding chapter 7 R.H. O'Connell, "Deuteronomy vii 1-26: asymmetrical concentricity and the rhetoric of conquest", in VT 42 (1992), pp. 248-265. These scholars base their view of the structure on the selecting of key-words and key-themes - in my opinion a rather subjective operation, not free from arbitrariness for lack of hard criteria to determine what key-words and key-themes are - see my criticism in *Deuteronomium* (POT), deel IA, pp. 104f., with Deut. 1:16-18 as a test case. There are exceptions of course, where the key-words are evident enough - see e.g. deel IB, p. 148.

¹⁷ See e.g. D.L. Christensen's article cited above, p. 137, and his commentary *Deuteronomy 1-11* (Word Biblical Commentary 6A), Dallas, Texas 1991, p. xli. He discerned a *fivefold* symmetric structure, which is similar to the one presented here, except that 4 and 30 are not differentiated: 1-3; 4-11; 12-26; 27-30; 31-34. Seeing the high frequency of the *sevenfold* pattern, I would suggest that this is one of the many instances. It is possible to detect a *ninefold* structure, differentiating the blessing-and-curse sections: 1-3; 4:1-40; 5:1-11:25; 11:26-32; 12-26; 27:1-26; 28-29; 30:1-20; 31-34 - see Craigie, *op. cit.*, p. 327 and Christensen's commentary, p. 222f. This illustrates the subjectiveness in detecting patterns in this way.

- 1-3 Opening narrative: Moses looks backwards
- 4:1-40 Opening prophetic sermon
- 5-11 The Horeb covenant
- 12-26 *The lawcode: statutes and stipulations*
- 27-29 The Moab covenant
- 30 Concluding prophetic sermon
- 31-34 Concluding narrative: Moses looks forwards.

These examples, which can easily be multiplied, must suffice to demonstrate the use of the menorah-pattern as a compositional technique to give unity and structure to texts and to focus special attention upon a crucial passage.

Having established the overall structure of the framework, let me now present and assess the numerical evidence gleaned from the logotechnical analysis to see whether, and to what extent, the numerical aspects of the framework corroborate its structure as presented here.¹⁸ In doing so I shall discuss the six sections to find out what light the numerical evidence can shed on their literary unity and their compositional history.

The numerical evidence: introductory remarks

The logotechnical (numerical) analysis of biblical texts - which should by no means be regarded as a new method to be applied apart from others, but as part and parcel of the literary critical (structural) analysis - is based on the supposition that these texts are numerical compositions structured by certain numbers. These numbers force themselves on us by the high frequency of their occurrence, when we count the larger and smaller literary units, the verses and words in a text as a whole and in its component parts. Seeing the high frequency, which cannot simply be dismissed as mere coincidence, chance occurrence must be ruled out.¹⁹

The supposition regarding the numerical structuring of the biblical texts has in the mean time been substantiated and supported by a great mass of evidence from my logotechnical analysis of the book of Deuteronomy. The results have converted the hypothesis into a fact, in the sense

¹⁸ For the numerical corroboration of our first example of an overall menorah-structure, Deuteronomy 27-30, see *Deuteronomium* (POT) deel III, under the headings 'Inleiding tot het derde hoofddeel (vervolg): Deuteronomium 31-34' and 'Literaire analyse van 27:1-26'. Regarding the second example, Deuteronomy 4 - 11, I discovered that, on the level of 'larger literary units', chapter 7 is situated in the mathematical centre of its framework consisting of six sections, with 26 preceding, and 26 following it. On verse level chapter 7 consists of 26 and its framework of 204 (12x17), that is without the introductory passage 4:44-49 - see *Deuteronomium* (POT), deel IB, pp. 50-51. The third example, the overall structure of the book as a whole, is not precise enough to be supported by numerical evidence - see the two preceding notes.

¹⁹ In the introduction to the reprint of my article "*Divine Speech in Deuteronomy*" (originally published in N. Lohfink (Hrsg.), *Das Deuteronomium* (BETL 68), Leuven 1985) in D.L. Christensen (ed.), *A Song of Power and the Power of Song, Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy*, Winona Lake, In., 1993, pp. 375-393, the editor correctly describes my approach as: "counting words and noting patterns that seem to defy the laws of probability, so far as chance occurrence is concerned" (p. 16).

of a discovery. This discovery can be undergirded by another hard fact, namely that the masoretes diligently counted verses and words, and even letters. Their aim was to ensure that the text was transmitted correctly, that is, to make certain that its numerical aspects were preserved - see above at note 14 with regard to their determining the centre of a text. This diligent counting was carried out even when in later times the intimate knowledge about the precise structures had faded and fallen into oblivion. My discovery of the exceptionally high frequency of occurrence of **17** and **26** in particular - the gematric values of the name YHWH - is supported by the Jewish tradition that the divine name has been 'woven' into Scripture as in a 'fabric'.²⁰

The only conclusion to be drawn from this, in my view, is that the scribes have indeed 'woven' these numbers into the fabric of the texts, to give them unity and structure and to 'seal' them, as it were, with the divine name. In doing so, their aim was probably, as Christensen wrote, "the preservation of a canonical form of the sacred tradition".²¹

At what stage in the process of the writing and the canonizing of the biblical texts the numerical structuring by means of the divine name numbers was executed, is still an open question. On the basis of the evidence I have been confronted with up till now - particularly the results of my logotechnical analysis of the whole book of Deuteronomy - I have come to the conclusion that this 'weaving' was practiced already during the earlier stages of the growth of the text, and in any case at the end of that process, when the text achieved its final form.²²

Further research must shed light upon the *historical* questions. The historical aspects of the biblical texts as numerical compositions are still waiting to be investigated. My own research has been, and will in future be, limited to the purely literary aspects. Who dare(s) to rise to the challenge of historical research in this respect?

²⁰ See *Deuteronomium* (POT), deel IA, p. 39 and cf. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 15 (1971) 1241: "Some said the entire Torah (= Scripture, C.J.L.) consists of the name of God set in succession... or interwoven in a fabric..."; see also G. Scholem, *Zur Kabbala und ihrer Symbolik*, Frankfurt 1973, p. 62, who wrote: "Es scheint, daß Gikatilla als erster diesen Begriff des Gewebes ('ariga) benutzte, um zu beschreiben, wie der Name Gottes in der Textur der Tora immer wieder vorkommt".

Nearly a century ago Oskar Goldberg stated: "Der Pentateuch ist von Anfang bis Ende ein Zahlensystem, dessen Grundzahlen sich unmittelbar aus den Name JHWH ergeben... als der in Zahlenschrift umgesetzte, entfaltete Name JHWH" - see his booklet *Die fünf Bücher Mosis ein Zahlengebäude*, Berlin 1908.

²¹ *Op. cit.* (see note 19 above), p. 17.

²² See *Deuteronomium* (POT) deel IA, pp. 154f. and 161-163, where I adduce evidence to this effect, e.g. with respect to the ethnographic notices in 2:10-12 and 2:20-23; see also in deel III the literary analysis of 27:1-26 and that of 27:1-8, and note the conclusions under the heading 'Visie op de redactiegeschiedenis'. See further below with regard to the redactional history of Deuteronomy 31-34.

The numerical structure of the framework as a whole

The numerical aspects of the Song and its framework, on the level of *verses*, can be visualized in the following survey:

I	31:1-13	Outer framework	13 verses
II	31:14-23	Interior framework	10 verses
III	31:24-30	Inner framework	7 verses
IV	32:1-43	The Song of Moses	43 verses
V	32:44-47	Inner framework	4 verses
VI	32:48-52	Interior framework	5 verses
VII	34:1-12	Outer framework	12 verses.

Without trying to decide what is purposefully designed and what is contingent, we get the following picture:

- the framework has **51** (3×17), the Song **43** ($17 + 26$) verses;
- II and III, dealing explicitly with the Song, have **17** verses;
- I and V, four speeches by Moses, have likewise **17** verses;
- II, III, V and VI (inner and interior framework): **26** verses;
- VI and VII, concerning the death of Moses, have **17** verses;
- IV, V and VI (his last words and his death): **52** (2×26) verses;
- I, VII (outer frame) and IV (the Song) have **68** (4×17) verses.

This survey demonstrates how the two divine name numbers **17** and **26** are woven into the fabric of the overall structure of the framework, which is a clear indication of its structural unity and an underlying unity of concept.

Looking at Moses' speeches addressed to 'all Israel', or 'in the hearing of all Israel' - in my view the most important criterion to trace the structure of the book - i.e. 31:2-6; 31:7-8; 32:1-43 and 32:46-47, on the level of *verses*, we find that there are exactly **52** ($2 \times 26 = 5 + 2 + 43 + 2$). This supports and confirms the evidence attesting to the unity of the whole passage. Let us now assess the numerical aspects on the level of *words* by examining the six sections comprising the framework. The following survey shows only the most significant aspects - for more details the reader is referred to my commentary.

i) The outer framework preceding the Song: 31:1-13

Applying the criterion 'narrative/speech' in the first literary unit 31:1-6), we count 11 words in the introductory narrative and **78** ($= 3 \times 26$) in Moses' speech. In passing it may be noted that there are 38 words in the plural passages and **51** (3×17) in the singular sections.

Moses' second speech, in 31:7-8, his installation charge to Joshua, consists of **34** (2×17) words.

His third speech, in 31:9-13, his address to the priests and the elders, is made up of 75 words - of which there are **51** (3x17) in vss. 10b-12 and 24 in vs. 13 - which brings the total number of words in Moses' three speeches to **187** (11x17).²³

This evidence attests to the unity of concept in the whole passage 31:1-13, of which the leading theme is the imminent death of Moses in which there are three motifs: 1) the fate of the Israelites (1-6); 2) the installation of Joshua as Moses' successor (7-8); and 3) the fate of the Torah as Moses' literary legacy (9-13). These motifs recur in the next passage, 14-23, the interior framework, where they are developed on a higher theological level in a different order.

1) In 31:14-15.23 Yahweh adds a new dimension to Joshua's installation by Moses (31:7-8) by appearing in a theophany in the tent to reinstall him personally, stressing in this way the importance of his leadership in view of the conquest;

2) in 31:16-18 Yahweh adds a new dimension to the motif 'the fate of the Israelites' (31:1-6) by introducing the motif of the danger of Israel's apostasy after the death of Moses;

3) and in 31:19-21 Yahweh enhances Moses' literary legacy (31:9-13) by ordering the composition of the Song as an extra bequest.

ii) The interior framework preceding the Song: 31:14-23

The number of words spoken by Yahweh are significant: 11 words in the first speech (31:14-15), **51** (3x17) in that part of the speech dealing with Israel's apostasy (31:16-17) and 16 in the rest of the speech. The total number of words spoken by Yahweh in 31:14-18 are **78** (3x26) - exactly the same number as those spoken by Moses in 31:1-6.

Of the 33 words in 31:22-23, 26 stand before the 'atnach. This is even more significant, since the total number of words in 31:16-23 (i.e. 31:16-21 + 22-23) are 177, with **102** (6x17) before, and 75 after the 'atnach.

Excursus on the redaction history of Deuteronomy 31-34

In this intermezzo I shall try to reconstruct the way in which the text of 31:14-23.24-30 achieved its present form and to trace the redactional history of chapters 31-34. We shall do so by examining the speeches - a very important structuring device used throughout the book. There is evidence to show that at an earlier stage of the redactional history of Deuteronomy, when the book was to be incorporated into the deuteronomistic work of history, the narrative passage 31:1-13, with its *three* speeches by Moses, was composed as the first draft of a postscript to the

²³ The numerical structure of 31:9-13 is dominated by the structural number seven, explicitly mentioned in the text (vs. 10), its compositional formula being 98=49Mc+49Sc, with 49 words before and 49 after the 'atnach; moreover there are 63(7x9) words in the singular sections and 35(7x5) in the plural passages - see the analysis in the Appendix to *Deuteronomium* (POT) deel III and the remarks in the commentary. The first example of an explicitly mentioned number structuring the text I found in 2:8b-15, where 38 gives structure to the 114 (3x38) words, 38 being used in the ethnographic notice, but there are more instances.

book, linking it to the rest of the work.²⁴

This postscript was probably not regarded as a fitting conclusion to the book, nor as a suitable transition to the book of Joshua, resulting in the addition of the story about Moses' succession by Joshua and his death. This was achieved by the construction of a text in which *four* divine speeches function as the counterpart to the three speeches by Moses. This addition brought the number of speeches to *seven* - one of the most important structuring numbers - forming a menorah-pattern. Significantly enough the very first YHWH-speech (31:14a), dealing with his intention to install Joshua and to accompany Moses on his last journey, is situated at the centre of the menorah-structure, its prominent position witnessing its importance.

It does not surprise us to notice that the leading theme of the addition to the postscript is explicitly announced in this very first divine speech. Therefore, the added text must have contained a story in which the main themes of 31:1-13, and 31:14 - and above all that of 3:26-28! - were developed and brought to completion with a narrative about Yahweh installing Joshua (31:23), Yahweh escorting Moses on his last journey (32:48-52), and Yahweh letting Moses view the land from the Pisgah and die there (34:1-12). So, the expanded postscript could have consisted of 31:1-13 + 14-15.23 + 32:48-52 + 34:1-12.

This hypothesis is undergirded by the numerical evidence with regard to these *seven* speeches. The logotechnical analysis on the level of words produced the following result:

	Moses' speeches	Yahweh's speeches
31:1-6	78 (3x 26)	-
31:7-8	34 (2x 17)	-
31:9-13	75	-
31:14-15	-	11
31: 23	-	16
32:48-52	-	77
34:1-12	-	15
31:1 - 34:12	187 (11x 17)	+ 119 (7x 17).

Such a numerical structure of the text, clearly dominated by the numbers 17 and 26, can only be explained as the outcome of purposeful design. This postscript was obviously intended to be the perfect conclusion to Deuteronomy and the ideal transition to the book of Joshua.

However, at a later stage this beautifully composed postscript was augmented once again, when the Song of Moses, 32:1-43, and its interior and direct framework, 31:14-23 + 24-30 and 32:44-47, were inserted. This operation was presumably executed in the following manner: first,

²⁴ See *Deuteronomium* (POT) deel III under the heading 'Inleiding tot het derde hoofddeel (vervolg)', as well as 'Visie op de redactiegeschiedenis'.

another Yahweh-speech (31:16-21) was inserted into the text of 31:14-15.23. This insertion was carried out by means of the frequently employed 'split-and-insert', or 'sandwich' compositional method.²⁵ The closely related text in Numb. 11:16-25 about the installation of the seventy elders was obviously used as the compositional model for the construction of the new text of 31:14-23. The rhetorical device used in Numb. 11:16-25 is that of retarding the course of the narrative by the insertion of an intermezzo. In Numbers 11 Yahweh's *intention* to bestow part of Moses' spirit on the elders (11:17), is followed by an intermezzo (11:18-23) and only realized in 11:24-25. This is a perfect parallel to Deut. 31:14-23, where Yahweh's *intention* to install Joshua (31:14-15) is followed by an intermezzo (31:16-21), with 31:22 reporting Moses' execution of Yahweh's command to compose a song.²⁶

At the time when 31:14-23 was reconstructed in order to form the interior framework to the Song, the two parts of its inner framework, 31:24-30 together with 32:44-47, were composed. In this way the whole text of the Song with its framework came to have its present menorah structure: 31:1-13 + 31:14-23 + 31:24-30 + 32:1-43 + 32:44-47 + 32:48-52 + 34:1-12.

Let us now resume our examination of the framework.

iii) The inner framework preceding the Song: 31:24-30

This passage was constructed as the *fourth* speech by Moses in the new postscript. It is clearly delimited by the inclusion-terms 'the words of this torah' in 31:24 and 'the words of this song' in 31:30, and the other inclusion-term 'to the end' in both verses. It has a beautiful menorah-structure, with verse 27, where Moses expresses his deep concern about the imminent danger of idolatry, forming the central core of the passage. It is a real jewel of compositional art, a *rhetorisches Prachtstück* - a term N. Lohfink applied to the seven verses of 29:21-28.²⁷

The 115 words of the seven verses are divided as follows between the two sections of the passage (31:24-26 and 31:27-30):

- i) 31:24-26, the introduction to the fourth speech by Moses and his command to the Levites to put the document containing the Song beside the ark, consists of 37 words;
- ii) 31:27-30, Moses' primary motivation (27), his command to summon the representatives of the people (28), followed by a second motivation (29) and his declamation of the Song to the representatives of the people (30), consist of **78 (3x26)** words. This is a clear indication that verse 30 is inextricably connected with the preceding passage 31:24-29. But there is more to

²⁵ Of this procedure I give several examples in my commentary *Deuteronomium* (POT) deel III under the heading 'Literaire analyse van 27:1-26'.

²⁶ For particulars with regard to this compositional procedure, see *Deuteronomium* (POT), deel III, the introduction to 31:16-21.

²⁷ See N. Lohfink, "Der Bundesschluss im Land Moab", p. 40 and see my comment in *Deuteronomium* (POT), under 'Literaire analyse van 29:1-28(2-29)'.

support this close connection.

The **78** words of 31:27-30 are evenly divided among the categories 'main clause' (Mc) and 'subordinate clause' (Sc), in such a way that they form a perfect numerical chiasmus (with an abba-pattern) - a compositional device used regularly to connect two sections of the text, whereby the corresponding elements (a and b) are arranged crosswise (see for another example further below *vi*) under c). At the same time both divine name numbers have been woven into the text:

	Mc	Sc	Total
Vss. 27-28	22	+ 17	= 39
Vss. 29-30	<u>17</u>	+ <u>22</u>	= <u>39</u>
Vss. 27-30	39	+ 39	= 78 (3x26).

The formula **39=22+17** (or **17+22**) is a standard compositional formula for texts with 39 words - see *Deuteronomium* (POT) deel IA, pp. 41f. for further examples. This unmistakable numerical chiasmus witnesses the close connection between vss. 27-28 and 29-30, showing that 31:30, the introductory link between the inner framework and the Song - wrongly regarded by some scholars as belonging to the text of the Song - is inextricably bound up with that of the inner framework. This applies to 32:44 too, the introductory link between the Song and the inner framework there, which does not form part of the text of the Song, since it belongs structurally to that of 32:45-47, as will be demonstrated below.²⁸

There is in my mind no doubt at all that the whole passage 31:24-30 was composed in one single operation as the inner framework to the Song. Since the initial postscript, into which the Song and its interior and inner framework were inserted, was a perfectly completed text, as we have seen, there is insufficient ground for the supposition that 31:24-26 had existed prior to their present context and had originally referred to the Torah. There was no room for such a text in that postscript, and certainly no need for it. Therefore, the current view of 31:24-26 as referring, or as having originally referred to the Torah, should be abandoned. The reasons are:

- 1) Moses' provision with regard to the Torah as his legacy, which he had entrusted to the care of the priests and elders, was dealt with definitively in 31:9-13. It is only in 32:46b that there is a further reference to the Torah;
- 2) the word *torah* in 31:24-26 should be understood as referring to the *Song as a torah*, for which there is substantial evidence, e.g. the strong resemblance between the Song and Psalm 78, which is explicitly called 'my torah', and the close connection between 31:16-29 and Is. 30:8f - see my comment on 31:24-26;
- 3) the book of the Torah of Moses, consisting of 1:1 - 30:20, was never supposed to be placed

²⁸ See note 5 above and in *Deuteronomium* (POT), the literary analysis of 31:24-30 and that of 32:44-47.

beside the ark, nor intended to serve as Yahweh's witness in the sense of vs. 26, this particular purpose and this special place being clearly reserved for the *Song* (vs. 14 and vs. 26!).²⁹

To conclude the discussion of the framework preceding the Song - by far the most difficult part - let me now present, in light of what has been brought forward above, the sequence of events as envisaged by the author/redactor responsible for the insertion of the Song into the postscript.

Excursus on the problem of the sequence of events

I came to the conclusion that there are fewer problems in this regard, provided that we come to a deeper understanding of the text and the intentions of the author/redactor. One aspect of this deeper understanding is the crucial insight that 'torah' in 31:24-26 does not refer to the Torah as a whole, but to the Song as a torah. Another consideration is that we recognize the use of the rhetorical technique of the *flash-back* and the accompanying pluperfect tense of the verbs in 31:9 and 32:44.³⁰

What is said in 31:9, "Moses had committed this torah to writing and had handed it to the priests...", refers to two acts certainly supposed by the author/redactor as having happened after Moses' concluding address in 29-30 and prior to his three speeches in 31:1-13. Having referred to these past acts (31:9), the author/redactor introduces in 31:10a Moses' command with regard to his Torah.

The other instance, 32:44, "Moses had come forward and had recited the words of this Song in the hearing of the people, he and Hoshea the son of Nun...", refers clearly back to 31:30, since Moses had spoken the words of the Song also in the hearing of the people. The introduction in 32:44-45 has the same function as 31:9-10: having referred to Moses' declamation of the Song (32:44), the author/redactor introduces in 32:45 Moses' concluding charge to the Israelites.

N. LOHFINK³¹ has suggested, as part of a possible solution to the problems in chapter 31, that we should differentiate between the *Fabelablauf* (the chronological sequence of events) and

²⁹ See for a full discussion my *Deuteronomium* (POT) at 31:24-30. For the most recent discussion see, P. Sanders, *op. cit.*, cited in note 8 above, pp. 341-343, and particularly N. Lohfink, "Zur Fabel in Dtn 31-32", cited above in note 11, who still adheres to the idea - see especially pp. 266f.

³⁰ Another instance of such a flash-back is 29:1a(2a), where the author/redactor refers back to 5:1, Moses' summoning of all Israel. I fully agree with N. Lohfink that 29:1a(2a) does not refer to a second gathering, since only one (5:1) is supposed - see my comment on 29:1a(2a) in *Deuteronomium* (POT). However, my interpretation of this verse as a flash-back - which has important consequences for the interpretation of 29:9-14(10-15) - differs from that by Lohfink, who understands Moses' summoning and addressing of the people as a performative act supposed to have been carried out *after* the conclusion of the covenant - see his article "Zur Fabel des Deuteronomiums", pp. 70f, and his more recent study "Bund als Vertrag in Deuteronomium", in ZAW 107 (1995), pp. 215-239, especially 228ff.

³¹ See N. Lohfink, "Zur Fabel in Dtn 31-32", especially pp. 261-263, and cf. his most recent articles, "Zur Fabel des Deuteronomiums", pp. 65-78, cited above, especially 70ff., and "Bund als Vertrag", in ZAW 107 (1995), pp. 215-239, especially 228ff. See also P. Sanders, *op. cit.*, pp. 342f.

the *Erzählfolge* (the order of events as they appear in the account), which need not be the same. This is true, in my opinion, with regard to the two cases mentioned above (31:9 and 32:44), but otherwise there is no further discrepancy whatsoever between the chronological sequence of events and the order in which they are narrated. The sequence of events following in 31:1ff., after Moses' concluding address in 29-30, is not as complex as LOHFINK suggests. This sequence can be imagined as follows:³²

1. Moses writes down his Torah and hands it to the priests and the elders (31:9 as flash-back);
2. Moses addresses the people in view of his nearing death about what they can expect after crossing the Jordan (31:1-6);
3. Moses summons Joshua and installs him (31:7-8);
4. Moses commands the priests and elders with regard to the Torah he had written and handed to them, which is to be recited every seventh year (31:9-13);
5. Yahweh speaks to Moses in connection with his nearing death, expressing his intention to (re)install Joshua; Moses and Joshua go into the tent and Yahweh appears to them (31:14-15);
6. Yahweh speaks to Moses in the tent about the danger of Israel's future apostasy and commands Moses and Joshua to compose a Song and teach it to the Israelites (31:16-21);
7. Moses executes Yahweh's command by composing the Song, in the tent, and teaching it to the Israelites outside (31:22);
8. Yahweh realizes his intention to (re)install Joshua (31:23);
9. Having committed the Song to a document, Moses hands it to the Levites - responsible for the Ark - instructing them to put it beside the Ark as Yahweh's witness (31:24-27);
10. In the same speech Moses orders the Levites to assemble all the elders of the tribes and the officers, the representatives of the people (31:28-29);
11. Moses recites the Song before 'the whole assembly of Israel', i.e. this assembly of representatives (31:30, referred to with a *flash-back* in 32:44);
12. Having recited the Song, Moses speaks to 'all Israel', delivering his final address (32:45) in which he urges his people to take the words of the Song to heart (46a) in order to teach their children to obey the Torah (46b-47);
13. Yahweh speaks to Moses, commanding him to go up the mountain to view the land and to conclude his life (32:48-52);
14. Moses climbs the Abarim/Nebo mountain range, goes up to the top of the Pisgah and views the land (34:1-4);
15. Moses dies there; Yahweh buries him and the Israelites weep for him (34:5-8; 34:9-12 being a necrology for Moses).

³² For Lohfink's view, see his "Zur Fabel in Dtn 31-32", p. 270 and cf. P. Sanders, *op. cit.*, pp. 342f.

iv) The inner framework following the Song: 32:44-47

The concluding part of the inner framework consists of exactly **68** (4x**17**) words, with **26** in the narrative introduction (32:44-45+46aα) and 42 in Moses' final address (32:46aβ-47). On the level of *clauses* (distinct parts of sentences) we count here **17** - see the logotechnical analysis - which is significant since the next passage, the interior frame in 32:48-52, has exactly **22**. The compositional formula **39=17+22**, which has also been used in 31:27-28 and 29-30 (see under iii) above) also occurs in the whole text of 32:44-47 + 48-52, attesting to the unity of composition in both sections.

v) The interior framework following the Song: 32:48-52

The concluding part of the interior framework consists of **85** (5x**17**) words, bringing the total number of words in 32:44-52 to exactly **153** (9x**17**, the sum of the numbers 1-17). To crown it all, the **85** words of 32:48-52 are divided into **34** (2x**17**) in the category 'main clause' (Mc) and **51** (3x**17**) in that of 'subordinate clause' (Mc). Moreover, the **77** words of Yahweh's speech in 32:49-52 are syntactically divided into **26** Mc and **51** Sc!

On the level of 'introduction/speech', the **153** words of both sections together (32:44-52) are divided as follows:

	Introduction		Speech		Total
Vss. 44-47	26	+	42	=	68 (4x 17)
Vss. 48-52	<u>8</u>	+	<u>77</u>	=	<u>85</u> (5x 17)
Vss. 44-52	34	+	119	=	153 (9x 17).

There can be no doubt whatsoever about the compositional unity of this part of the inner and interior framework.

vi) The outer framework following the Song, 34:1-12

On the basis of its content, themes and motifs the concluding part of the outer framework can be divided into three 'smaller' literary units: a) 1-4, b) 5-8 and c) 9-12. This division of the text is corroborated by the numerical evidence:

a) The first passage, 34:1-4, the report about Yahweh letting Moses view the land, consists of 64 words, with **43** before the 'atnach (**17** in vss. 2-3 and **26** in vs. 1 and vs. 4 - with 13 words in each before the 'atnach) and 21 after the 'atnach. Moreover, the 64 words are so divided that **26** are in the category 'main clause' (Mc) and 38 in 'subordinate clause' (Sc).

b) In 34:5-8, the report about the death and burial of Moses and the mourning for him, the first part (5-6) consists of **26** words; the second part (7-8) has likewise **26** words. The 116 words of the whole text of 34:1-8 are so divided that **78** (3x**26**) are in Mc and 38 in Sc.

c) In 34:9-12, the necrology for Moses, the first part (9-10), about his significance, has **34** words (**17** in Mc and **17** in Sc); the second part (11-12), the motivation with reference to his great

deeds, has **26** words (9 in Mc and **17** in Sc). Moreover, verses 10-11 are structured by the same formula as that of verses 11-12, but in the reverse order: **26** = 9Mc + **17**Sc. This means that the whole text of the necrology is bound together by a numerical chiasmus - see above under *iii*) for exactly the same compositional device used in 31:24-30:

	Mc	Sc	Total
Vss. 9-10	17	+ 17	= 34
Vss. 11-12	<u>9</u>	+ 17	= <u>26</u>
Vss. 9-12	26	+ 34	= 60 .

The readers, even those who do not read Dutch, can easily check for themselves - by a glance at the appendix to my *Deuteronomium* III - this impressive bulk of evidence showing an extreme accumulation of the divine name numbers **17** and **26**.³³

These facts - together with the *sevenfold* occurrence of the divine name YHWH which also contributes to the unity of the chapter - unequivocally attest to the compositional unity of the text of Deuteronomy 34. These twelve verses have been subjected to very harsh treatment by the dissecting knife of old-time and current old-style literary criticism.³⁴ This type of analysis has resulted in a very negative view of this chapter among scholars. However, the remarkable style - of which P. Stoellger (*op. cit.*, p. 48) noted with regard to 34:9-12 that it was "unbeholfen, starr und schematisch" - can now satisfactorily be explained in light of the logotechnical analysis as the result of the extremely intricate numerical structure of the text. One of the typical features of the last chapter of Deuteronomy is the exceedingly high frequency of the divine name numbers - more than elsewhere in the book - showing the enormous trouble the author/redactor took to achieve the sophisticated numerical structures in which these numbers abound so profusely.

³³ I have also determined the total number of words in the six sections of the framework and counted 882 (229 + 209 + 115 + 68 + 85 + 176 = 882), only 2 words short of the 'magic' number 884, which is 17x52 = 26x34. Did the scribes actually strive to attain this number, or does MT miss two words? Further research might provide an answer to this question.

³⁴ For the most recent examples of old-style literary critical analysis of chapter 34, see P. Stoellger, "*Deuteronomium 34 ohne Priesterschrift*", in ZAW 105 (1993), pp. 26-51 - who, following L. Perlitt, rightly rejects the idea of a 'priestly' tampering with the text. See also Félix García López, "*Deut 34, Dtr History and the Penta-teuch*", in F. García Martínez (ed.), *Studies in Deuteronomy* (FS - C.J. Labuschagne), Leiden - New York - Köln 1994, pp. 47-61, and the recent commentary by E. Nielsen, *Deuteronomium* (HAT I/6), Tübingen 1995, pp. 308ff.

Conclusions

Having carried out a logotechnical investigation of the text of Deuteronomy 31-34, the setting of the Song of Moses, in order to determine its numerical aspects - the first crucial step in literary critical analysis - I could establish the compositional structure of the text as it lies before us. This synchronic approach showed that the Song of Moses is situated right in the centre of a sevenfold structure forming its outer, interior and inner framework: 31:1-13; 31:14-23; 31:24-30; 32:1-43; 32:44-47; 32:48-52; 34:1-12.

The analysis of the six component parts of the framework paved the way to the redaction critical diachronic study of the text. It appeared that 31:1-13, the first draft of a postscript to the book (1:1 - 30:20), was augmented by the addition of 31:14-15.23 + 32:48-52 + 34:1-12, in which the main theme of 31:1-13 and 3:26-28 was developed on a higher theological level by the construction of four Yahweh-speeches complementing the three speeches by Moses, and by concluding the story of Moses' succession by Joshua and his death under Yahweh's personal guidance. This text was structured by these seven speeches in a menorah pattern, the crucial divine speech in 31:14a being its central core: 1-6; 7-8; 9-13; 14-15; 23; 32:48-52; 34:1-12. Its strong numerical structure shows that it was intended to be the definitive postscript with the view to integrating the book into the deuteronomistic work of history.

However, this postscript was augmented once again, at the time of the insertion of the Song and its framework: a fifth Yahweh-speech (31:16-21+22) was inserted into 31:14-15.23, and two additional speeches by Moses were constructed (31:24-30 and 32:44-47). The passages 32:48-52 and 34:1-12, which had already existed as integral parts of the original postscript, were retained to form the interior and outer framework. This means that the Song, the first part of its interior framework, and its inner framework, belong to that stage in the growth of the book that preceded the final stage, when the Blessing was inserted.